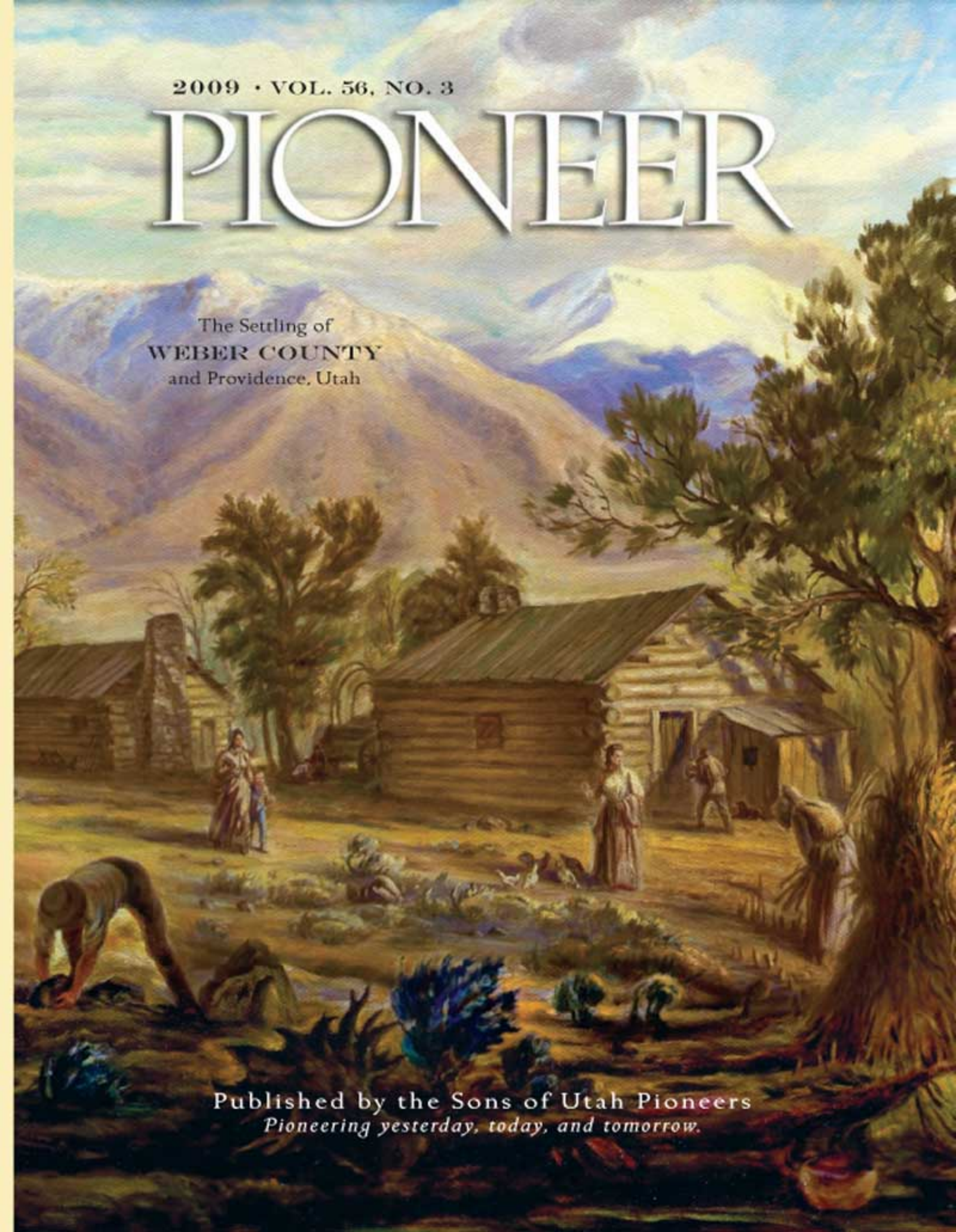


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PIONEER

The Settling of
WEBER COUNTY
and Providence, Utah



Published by the Sons of Utah Pioneers
Pioneering yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

PIONEER

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MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers is to preserve the memory and heritage of the early pioneers of the Utah Territory. We honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination.

The society also honors present-day pioneers worldwide in many walks of life who exemplify these same qualities of character. It is further intended to teach these same qualities to the youth who will be tomorrow's pioneers.

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*Kil Carson had decided on the
West, & Miles did the same.*

UTAH'S FIRST CITIZEN

Miles Goodyear

Charles Kelly, ranger and writer, calls Miles Goodyear Utah's first citizen, and indeed he has just claim to such a title. Perhaps he might well be called the guide of the 1847 company of Saints to Salt Lake Valley for he met the vanguard of the Saints near Evanston and guided Porter Rockwell down the Echo Canyon and then along the Weber River until Rockwell found the going too tough for the "boss," Brother Brigham.

As with many mountain men, Miles Goodyear was a Yankee by birth and seemed to have inherited the Yankee traits for sharp trading. He was orphaned at three and raised through the charity of relatives and neighbors. This undoubtedly influenced his thinking and love of freedom, which he valued more than security. Perhaps as with many other bound boys, he tired of his shackles and ran away from home, traveling as fast and far as possible until finally he could breathe more freely the air of freedom. Where could a boy go? Kit Carson had decided on the West, and Miles did the same.

On April 30, 1836, the sixteen-year-old Miles Goodyear met the Marcus Whitman party (Dr. Whitman, his new bride Narcissus, Henry H. Spaulding and bride, William H. Gray, and three Nez Perce Indians). He had traveled far, was half

clothed, cold, wet, and very hungry from a two-day lack of meals. He told the Whitman party a tale of some truth—he was from Iowa, needed ammunition, and wanted to go to the mountains. The generosity of the missionaries was such that they supplied him from their larder with food and ammunition, but they also advised him to return to Iowa. The supplies he accepted; the advice he refused.

His offer to aid the party was accepted, however, and they agreed to supply him, in turn, with a horse and equipment. However, at Fort Hall, he left the Whitman party, explaining he did not care for the missionaries—no offense intended—and he wanted to be free to go as he pleased and where. The parting was generous—the Whitmans paid him with an outfit that he had well earned.

Miles' first three years in the mountains were a schooling for him. He lacked supplies and skill to trade with the Indians, and he worked as a camp tender or roustabout. Trappers were free with their knowledge and stories, and gradually Miles learned some rudiments of the trade as he built up a small fund for trading. His reputation at Fort Hall was good, and so when he decided to become an independent trader, the Factor of the Hudson Bay post of Fort Hall, named Grant, extended credit to him. With a pack animal, horse, rifle, and supplies Miles set out for the Great Basin to trade.

Much of Miles Goodyear's trading was done in Utah, and he reportedly went as far south as the Sevier Valley in the south central part of the state. In his second year of trading, he spent some time in Utah Valley and near Payson became acquainted with Chief Pe-teet-need. The chief had a comely daughter named Pomona whom Miles met. It is doubtful if there were much of a courtship except for the usual exchange of goods with the chief for his daughter, Pomona. As with many Indian brides of trappers, her life was hardly one of romantic adventure and she might well be termed a "fur-widow" for the far-flung trading field called to her husband. However, she did have two children, a boy, William Miles, and a girl, Mary Eliza.

As with all trappers and traders, Miles dreamed of owning his own fort and trading from it. A site for a fort must be chosen carefully. Three prerequisites were necessary, namely, timber, water and grass. In addition, there was also needed a nearby supply of game animals for food and furs.

Jim Bridger had seen the handwriting on the wall and knew that the day of the fur trapper was over. The rumble of wheels of the Whitman party along the Oregon Trail had been followed by other groups. In 1843, Bridger and Louis Vasquez founded Fort Bridger on Black's Fork of the Green River for the convenience of travelers. Such a fort offered much better and safer means of doing business than going from tribe to tribe in search of furs. Furthermore, it would serve as a market to emigrants going west who would need some supplies and horses.

Miles knew of Bridger's fort, and as he looked for a

Peter Skene Ogden . . .

Fur trader, trapper, explorer, intrepid leader of Hudson Bay Fur Company. He visited Utah in 1825, 1828 and 1829. Discovered the Humboldt River, in present Nevada, in 1828 and explored thoroughly the northern shores of the Great Salt Lake in 1829. Established Ogden's Hole, modern Huntsville, Utah, the center of the Indian fur trade. Ogden City, valley, river and canyon bear his name.¹

Peter Skene Ogden was born at Quebec, Canada, in 1794. He was the son of a prominent lawyer. . . . It has been said of him that he always remained a cultured gentleman and continued to live a noble life.

However, Peter at an early age showed his adventurous spirit and love for an out-of-door life. When he reached maturity, he rejected the law profession and became a trapper. Now he is regarded as one of the most famous explorers and pioneers of the West—a true frontiersman whose name is prominent in Weber County history.

[Ogden] trapped in central Canada until 1818 and then came to the Pacific Coast. . . . In the fall of 1824 Ogden took command of the Snake River expedition. . . . [His] journal relates the experiences of the members of his company during the winter of 1824–25. On December 22, he wrote: "If we do not find some game, we shall surely starve. My Indian guides threaten to leave us. . . . On New Year's Day Ogden wrote: "We had more fasting than feasting. . . . Our horses can



scarcely crawl for want of grass; but march they must or starve. . . . Two weeks later . . . "A horse this day killed— his hoof was found entirely worn away, only the raw stump left."

Ogden had merely reached the northern border of Utah in 1825. His next trip to the state was in 1828. On December 23, he wrote: "Here we are at the end of Great Salt Lake, having this season explored one-half of the north side of it and can safely assert, as the Americans have of the south side, that it is a barren country, destitute of everything."² Interpretation of Ogden's Journal leads to the conclusion that he probably did not reach the Great Salt Lake region at all until 1828, and he did not come to Weber County at that time.³ But he went around the north end of the lake and swung westward, and explored that summer the whole region north and northwest of the Great Salt Lake. He discovered and trapped the Humboldt River in Nevada, which was called the Ogden River until Fremont changed its name in 1843.

The first trip that we definitely know that Peter Skene Ogden made to Ogden River, Ogden's Hole, and other points in Weber County took place in the fall of 1830. Joseph L. Meek, a member of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, left



an account of Ogden and his British trappers' being camped on the present site of Ogden City, when the American trappers arrived under Fitzpatrick.⁴ ▣

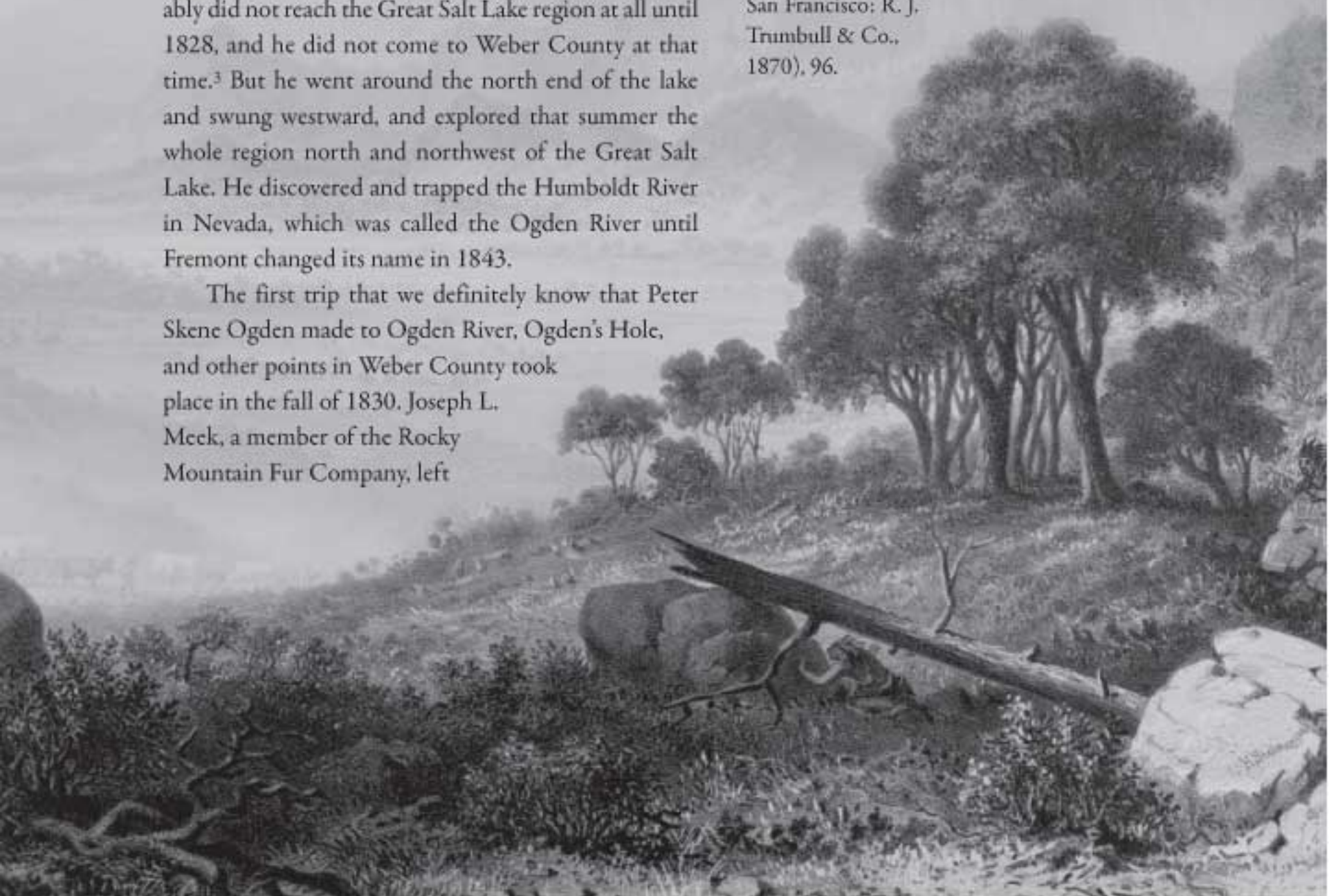
Excerpts cited from Milton R. Hunter, Beneath Ben Lomond's Peak: A History of Weber County, 1824–1900 (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1966), 16–18.

1 Plaque information on This Is the Place Monument.

2 *Ogden Journal*, Dec. 1824, Dec. 1828, cited in *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 11:388.

3 Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (New York: Barnes & Noble, c1935), 1:788–89.

4 Francis E. Victor, *The Rivers of the West* (Hartford, Conn.; Toledo, Ohio: R. W. Bliss & Co.; Newark, N.J.: Bliss & Co.; San Francisco: R. J. Trumbull & Co., 1870), 96.



site for his, he kept in mind a location that would be both an Indian trading center as well as a possible emigrant stopping point. The mouth of the Weber River seemed to be a logical site, for it was near Indian trails as well as a wintering ground for the Shoshone. Furthermore, the area had received the blessings of John Charles Fremont, who saw it as a stopping point for emigrants going west. Certainly, to a man on horseback, the Weber Canyon led straight to Fort Bridger, a logical route from the East to California.

With a small capital of horses, cattle, and goats, Miles was ready to launch his venture in 1845. His credit was good at not-far-away Fort Hall. He set to work with vigorous industry to build Fort Buena Ventura on the Weber River near [present-day] 29th Street to the east of the Union Pacific Station. Here his fort of two or three log houses, sheds, and a stockade-surrounded yard remained for nearly five years until high water of the river forced the new owner to move it to higher ground. Later it became the home of Mrs. Minerva P. Stone Shaw, who gave it to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers in 1926. Two years later they moved it to its present location on the west of the Tabernacle grounds in Ogden.

However, a fort could not suppress the travel urge, and in 1846, he left his wife behind to care for his small plot of land and animals. This trip took him to California, where he met John Charles Fremont. A sale was made to the Captain for a total of \$1,888.00—paid for in un-honored government vouchers. In the spring of 1847, Miles returned to Utah, driving a herd of cheap California horses which he intended to sell at Fort Bridger. His return journey followed the Donner Trail from Donner Lake to a point near Evanston, Wyoming. Here, on July 10, 1847, Miles Goodyear met the Mormon scouting party of Norton Jacobs, George A. Smith, Erastus Snow, and Porter Rockwell. He agreed to guide Porter Rockwell to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake via the Weber Canyon. Porter was pleased with the trip through Echo Canyon and Weber Canyon east of Devil's Slide. However, as the canyon narrowed, the traveling became more difficult for the men on horseback. Mute evidence of the difficulty of the party of emigrants of the previous year was etched on the canyon wall for they had tried to build a wagon road over the turbulent and swollen Weber

“MILES KNEW OF BRIDGER’S FORT, AND AS HE LOOKED FOR A SITE FOR HIS, HE KEPT IN MIND A LOCATION THAT WOULD BE BOTH AN INDIAN TRADING CENTER AS WELL AS A POSSIBLE EMIGRANT STOPPING POINT. THE MOUTH OF THE WEBER RIVER SEEMED TO BE A LOGICAL SITE.”





River. Porter Rockwell is credited with saying that the “. . . Old Boss would never take wagons over such a damned trail . . .” and indeed Brother Brigham did not. Instead, he decided to follow the dimming trail of the Donners from Henefer to Salt Lake City.

Miles Goodyear had in July, 1847, more business than he had bargained for. He had hoped emigrants would stop at his door to trade for horses and supplies. Now he had neighbors by the hundreds who probably would never want to trade. Freedom which he had prized so much eleven years earlier now was challenged. Still the man could not just pick up and move. There was the matter of a fort, stock, and land. On the other hand, it is doubtful if the early Mormon settlers in Salt Lake Valley cherished any more the idea of a gentile neighbor, either. Both would be glad to see Miles move on to some other fort or pasture.

Captain James Brown, commander of the Pueblo detachment, left Salt Lake City for California in order to draw the pay due his men. His route took him through Fort Buena Ventura, where he discussed the possible sale of the fort with Miles Goodyear. The Yankee fur-trader was indifferent but encouraging, and some of the Mormons accompanying Captain Brown returned to Salt Lake City, reporting to Brother Brigham that Miles probably would sell the fort. Brother Brigham was happy to know this, and he authorized the purchase of the property from Goodyear.

Andrew Goodyear, Miles' younger brother, took the advice of his brother to come west, and in November, 1847, arrived at Fort Buena Ventura. Miles and Andrew appeared reluctant to sell, but since the Saints had hard cash to offer, he indicated that he might. There was the usual round of Yankee trading and bickering, but finally the sum of \$1950 was arrived at. All concerned said it was fair.

The deed was another matter. A Spanish land grant gave to Miles Goodyear all the land in Weber Valley east of the Great Salt Lake, south of an east–west line drawn from the lake through Hot Springs to the Wasatch Mountains, west of the Wasatch Mountains to the Weber Canyon, and north of an east–west line from the Weber Canyon to the lake. These are roughly

the boundary lines of present-day Weber County. As for the Spanish land grant, well, that was probably an invention of Miles Goodyear to safeguard his property from Mormon encroachment or to add a note of legality to his sale. After a century of looking, no one has found the deed.

With his land sold and \$1950 in his pocket—more than he had ever had before or after, according to Dr. Leland H. Creer—Goodyear started out for California but not before he aided the Saints once more. He told his friend, Porter Rockwell, and companion, Jefferson Hunt, about the southern route to California which they later took. Goodyear followed the same route, and while in California—1848—bought a herd of horses with the money he had received for his Ogden real estate transaction. These he drove east in 1848 to Fort Leavenworth, where he hoped to sell them to the army, but the army was not in the market for horses now the war with Mexico had ended. Miles, therefore, wintered along the bottoms of the Missouri River and in the spring started for California with his horses via the Oregon Trail. The gold rush was on, and a new market for horses had suddenly blossomed, so that he had no trouble in making a profitable sale.

When he left Ogden for California, Miles Goodyear had left his wife—Pomona, and two half-breed children, William Miles and Mary Eliza—behind. It is not clear, but Pomona apparently deserted her absent husband, leaving the children in the care of the Mormons. She then married Sanpitch, an Indian, who mistreated her. As a result, she died shortly thereafter.

Goodyear fared little better. After his sale of the horses, he sickened and died November 12, 1849, leaving his property to his brother Andrew and his children in the care of Brigham Young. The boy, William Miles, joined his Uncle Andrew in 1852, and the girl, Mary Eliza, in 1860. Both children grew to adulthood but died comparatively early from tuberculosis. ▣

From The SUP News, Volume 6, No. 8, August, 1969. Author's name not given.

Paintings of Fort Buenaventura (2–3), Brown's Fort (10–12), and Lorin Farr's Gristmill (18–19) by Farrell R. Collett, courtesy Weber State College.



Ben Lomond Peak, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah